

Message Text

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S E C R E T BEIRUT 4244

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, LE
SUBJ: LEBANON: INTERNAL SITUATION

1. IN OUR JULY 26 MEETING DURING WHICH FONMIN BOUTROS INFORMED ME OF LEBANESE PLANS TO SEND TROOPS TO SOUTH, WE ALSO DISCUSSED BRIEFLY INTERNAL SITUATION IN LIGHT CONTINUED SYRIAN BOMBARDMENT OF HADETH (WHICH SEEMS TO HAVE HALTED EVENING OF 26TH). BOUTROS ASKED ME TO TELL HIM FRANKLY WHAT I THOUGHT CHRISTIAN MILITIA LEADERS WANTED.

2. I SAID BASHIR GEMAYEL HAD BEEN TALKING IN REASONABLE TERMS THE PAST TWO DAYS. HE HAD TOLD YELLIN HE DID NOT WANT TO PROVOKE SYRIANS AND HE HAD TOLD SAME THING TO CECIL HOURANI (WHO REPORTS BASHIR WS INTERESTED IN A NONAGGRESSION PACT WITH PALESTINIANS WHICH WOULD PERMIT SYRIANS TO LEAVE). I FELT THAT BASHIR MIGHT NEVERTHELESS SUBSCRIBE TO THE VIEW

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ADVANCED BY CHARLES MALIK TO HOURANI AT THE SAME TIME TO THE EFFECT THAT WHAT LEBANON NEEDED WAS MORE CHAOS OUT OF WHICH A NEW ORDER COULD EMERGE.

3. BOUTROS LAUGHED AND SAID THAT BASHIR HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED BY HIS CONTACTS IN THE U.S. TO PASS SOOTHING MESSAGES TO PEOPLE FOR MY EARS. HE WAS ALSO TO ATTEMPT TO WOO MY NEW

DCM, LUCIEN KINSOLVING.

4. BOUTROS SAID THAT BASHIR GEMAYEL AND THE CHAMOUNISTS HAD STARTED THE TROUBLE IN HADATH AND WERE PROUD OF WHAT THEY HAD DONE. HOW COULD ANYONE EXPECT TO BRING ORDER INTO A SITUATION LIKE THAT? I SAID IT SEEMED TO ME THE ONLY SOLUTION WAS TO ARRANGE FOR WITHDRAWAL OF THE SYRIAN TROOPS FROM BEIRUT AND THEIR REPLACEMENT WITH THE LEBANESE ARMY. BOUTROS DID NOT REJECT IDEA OUT OF HAND BUT INDICATED THAT SYRIAN ARMOUR-PROPER WAS VERY SERIOUS PROBLEM AND THAT THEY NEEDED SEVERAL WEEKS OF QUIET BEFORE THEY COULD ARRANGE A DISENGAGEMENT. SO FAR THEY HAD NOT HAD THEM.

5. WE DISCUSSED SYRIAN TACTICS AND BOUTROS ASKED HOW WE COULD EXPLAIN THEM. I SPECULATED THAT HAFEZ AL-ASAD DID NOT REALLY KNOW WHAT THE SYRIAN ARMY IN LEBANON WAS DOING. SHELLING HOSPITALS WAS NOT THE WAY TO GET AT THE PHALANGE AND THE CHAMOUNISTS, AND AL-ASAD WOULD UNDERSTAND THAT. BOUTROS COMMENTED THAT WHEN HE LAST SAW AL-ASAD THE LATTER HAD SAID THAT HIS POLICY IN LEBANON HAD NEVER BEEN SO POPULAR. FOR OVER A YEAR HE HAD BEEN ON THE DEFENSIVE BECAUSE OF HIS ATTEMPT TO MAINTAIN GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE LEBANESE FRONT. NOW THAT HE WAS ATTACKING THEM, HE WAS GETTING SUPPORT FROM ALL SIDES.

6. COMMENT. IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT DURING FIVE NIGHTS OF
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INDISCRIMINATE BOMBARDMENT BY A FOREIGN ARMY OF A MAJOR POPULATION CENTER WHICH IS A SUBURB OF THE COUNTRY'S CAPITAL, NO OFFICIAL OF THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT HAS MADE ANY OFFICIAL DECLARATION OR CALLED UPON US OR ANY OTHER POWERS FOR HELP OR SUGGESTED ANY COURSE OF ACTION WE COULD TAKE IN COMMON. I SUPPOSE THERE HAVE BEEN OTHER GOVERNMENTS IN OTHER PLACES AT OTHER TIMES WITH THIS SAME JELLYFISH-LIKE POSTURE BUT OFF HAND I CANNOT THINK OF ANY. PARKER

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